Executive Summary

At the meeting of Court in December 2019, the workshop on the Global Civic University gave the University key insights and direction to develop our global civic role.

The contributions from that workshop have been analysed, key themes emerged and the University has continued to progress towards its mission of being a leading global civic university. Developments have been shaped this feedback as well as by the particular challenges of the past year.

The Civic mission is now embedded in the University’s overall strategy as a new pillar - ‘Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility’ and firm plans are in place to co-produce a Civic University Agreement with our city-region partners and to establish a formal governance structure for our civic mission. All this will ensure that progress on our global civic mission continues to accelerate.

Supporting Information

Paper below.
Court 2019

1. The meeting of Court in December 2019, themed around the Global Civic University, gave us the opportunity to gain insights and suggestions on how to develop our global civic role. The contributions from that workshop have been analysed, and key themes that emerged included:

- Furthering the widening participation agenda and increasing outreach;
- Improving accessibility and navigation of the University;
- Increasing efforts around equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Improving processes for partnership and collaboration;
- Addressing challenges around accommodation and integration of students;
- Developing the civic agenda with sustainability in mind.

Progress since Court 2019

2. The progress the University has made since Court last met has been shaped by acting on the themes above and responding to global and local priorities, particularly: COVID-19 response and recovery; the Black Lives Matter protests and our wider efforts on anti-racism and equality, diversity and inclusion; and the climate emergency. The University has continued to collaborate closely with many members of Court and is grateful for Court’s suggestions and partnership to progress this work despite the pressures that COVID-19 has brought.

3. This paper provides some highlights from the last year and sets out how we will continue to progress this activity over the coming months in collaboration with staff, students and our external partners.

Launching an immediate civic response to COVID-19

4. As the COVID-19 crisis broke, we took a coordinated approach to delivering essential COVID-19 research as well as forming the COVID-19 Civic Response Group to meet immediate civic needs, for example: staff and students joining the NHS; providing accommodation and free parking for NHS staff; donating and 3D-printing of PPE; and producing hand sanitiser. Academics have also been regularly featured in the media and have published impactful research on COVID-19 (for example, via Bristol University Press). Other contributions included:

- Providing expertise in city planning for a resilient, inclusive economic recovery as a stakeholder in the delivery of Bristol’s One City Plan and the One City Recovery Strategy;
- Collaborating with Black South West Network to understand the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on BAME communities;
- Supporting local SMEs impacted by COVID-19 by making £100,000 available to fully fund 100 student internships and by highlighting opportunities to buy locally or volunteer through Universal City Platform, co-developed with CARGO;
- Contributing to COVID-19 response and recovery projects by allocating funding for civic engagement projects;
- Maximising the impact of student volunteering efforts led by Bristol SU by collaborating with partners including Bristol City Council early in the pandemic to identify priority needs across the city.
Accelerating our civic partnership working

5. We maintain long-standing civic partnerships with local government bodies, the NHS and initiatives including: Bristol One City; Bristol Health Partners, Bristol Green Capital Partnership, and the Natural History Consortium. We also have a long history of engaging with the cultural life of the city and region, for example as a partner in the Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (including supporting Bristol Festival of Ideas) alongside partnerships with many cultural and creative organisations in the city. In the last year, several memoranda of understanding have been signed to set out how we will build on these partnerships and engagements to maximise mutual benefit and impact for the city region. These include: Bristol City Council and the Bristol City Office to support strategic city planning; Knowle West Media Centre to build and sustain community-focused digital innovation research; and Black South West Network to carry out research into inclusion and race equality.

6. Continuing work towards the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus has also done much to forward and embed the global civic university agenda, including through the recent opening of a micro-campus in Barton Hill, hosted and developed in partnership with the Wellspring Settlement. It is designed to support University engagement activity, particularly staff and students working with communities and organisations in East Bristol. It will: enable research co-production; provide opportunities for engaged learning; host outreach and widening participation projects; create staff and student volunteering opportunities; and host staff recruitment events.

7. We will shortly be submitting a planning application for the New University Library, which will also house the Theatre Collection and Special Collections. This new space will enable a broad range of users to engage with our world class collections. A range of exhibition, event, social and public spaces will open-up opportunities for research co-production, student and community engagement. We will continue to collaborate with partners and local communities as we develop our plans over the coming months in order to maximise beneficial outcomes.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

8. The University contributes to various collaborative working groups across the City that look at identifying and addressing challenges surrounding creating inclusion across our region including:
   • Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group – Professor Judith Squires;
   • Commission of Race and Equality – Professor Olivette Otele;
   • We Are Bristol History Commission – Professor Tim Cole;
   • Bristol HR Leaders Race Equality Group, Bristol Equality Charter Network, Bristol Race Equality COVID-19 Steering Group – Tracy Brunnock;
   • Diversity Apprenticeship hub – Rebecca Scott.

9. As one of the region’s largest employers we are also developing a consistent, diverse and inclusive approach to resourcing. Local engagement highlighted that our employment opportunities are not accessed by all and stable employment will be key in the city’s COVID-19 recovery. To improve employability opportunities across the city, we are launching Diversify, a set of positive actions measures to improve diversity of representation and reduce barriers to gaining employment at the University. It will include:
   • JOIN US! - a new programme to reach, inform, prepare and recruit new staff from local communities;
   • eXcelBristol - a trainee programme combining on-the-job learning with an apprenticeship qualification which so far has supported three new staff members (apprenticeship qualifications are also being used to support existing staff in their career progression);
• **Discovery Workshops** - sessions open to local people to find out more about specific vacancies, working at the University, and how to navigate our job application processes.

**Widening Participation**

10. The University’s numerous Widening Participation activities have been adapted for engagement during the pandemic, moving engagement online, working in partnership with organisations such as **IntoUniversity** centres in South and East Bristol and supporting **Venturers Trust** schools that are co-sponsored by the University. In addition:

- Over 50 local mature students are taking part in the University’s flagship outreach programme, **Access to Bristol**, who will benefit from a guaranteed offer or interview to study at the University when they complete the scheme, as part of our work to make courses more accessible to a wide range of learners;
- Hundreds of prospective students have engaged with current students and academics through new **virtual learning resources**, ensuring that students from a range of backgrounds can continue to gain valuable knowledge and connections with the University.

**Sustainability**

11. The Sustainability team have continued to drive initiatives and actions around the Sustainability agenda, investing in new technologies to reduce energy wastage and renewable energy and buying renewable energy. The team have also:

- Accelerated progress towards our target of **carbon neutrality by 2030**, with a 40% reduction since 2005, ensuring we are contributing to Bristol’s **One City Climate Strategy**;
- Collaborated with local businesses for student placements to build sustainability into business practice whilst giving valuable experience to our students.

**Global civic engagement**

12. Being a **global** civic university means addressing global challenges locally, using local experience to inspire international collaboration and bringing international experience to bear on the local. Some examples include:

- The **COVID-19 Student Response Network** developed and led by students has provided free consultancy services for Bristol charities during the pandemic, supporting fundraising and business planning. It has also proven to be valuable experience for students and its success meant it has **expanded internationally**;
- An innovative public engagement project launched in Bristol provided **public health messages through street art** to reach those that may not otherwise access COVID-19 guidance – it inspired a parallel project in Nairobi;
- The University’s membership of the **Metrolab** network, in partnership with the City of Bristol, has created the opportunity to work with over 30 City-University collaborations (mostly based in the US) to transform the way new technology is created to deliver greater social and environmental benefits.

**Going forward**

13. The last year has highlighted the civic role of our university in dramatic new ways and seen key positive steps forward, however we are aware of how much more there is to be done. Our next steps will be underpinned by the new University strategy which will include a new **Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility** pillar. It insists that the University asks not just what are
we good at, but what are we good for, and for whose good do we work. It builds on much past activity but represents a new emphasis and direction and focusses our thinking on how we benefit our city region, whilst retaining our global outlook. In particular, it will drive greater recognition of existing civic activity, identify gaps, and push us to create a bolder vision of the University as a global civic university.

14. In the coming year, plans are in place to create a Civic Committee to oversee this new strategic pillar, as well as to write and sign a full Civic University Agreement (CUA), as recommended by the Civic University Commission, who have been examining how universities can better serve their places. The CUA development will begin with an audit of current activity followed by a programme of engagement with partners. This will lead to the co-creation of a clear set of priority areas and action plan for the University’s civic mission.

15. We are also committed to co-developing metrics with partners to measure progress, impact and mutual benefit. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have gained traction in the city, with coordinated activity including a Local Voluntary Review in 2019 (Bristol and the SDGs) by academics Sean Fox and Allan Macleod, and the One City Plan and Dashboard initiatives led by Mayor Marvin Rees. In 2021, the Civic Committee will examine how the SDGs might be applied to the work of the University, thus giving a common framework for plans and actions with the city and our partners. SDGs are already widely used to focus intervention and practice in certain areas of university activity. The next challenge is to bring SDGs to bear on our global civic aspirations for the University as a whole.

16. As we continue to accelerate our global civic mission, we are committed to continuing to work in close collaboration with Court members as well as other partners. Working in partnership will ensure our plans reflect the needs of the city and region in this period of recovery from COVID-19 and beyond.